



200098

**Tetra Tech EM Inc.**

200 E. Randolph Drive, Suite 4700 ♦ Chicago, IL 60601 ♦ (312) 856-8700 ♦ FAX (312) 938-0118

June 12, 2003

Mr. Craig Thomas
On-Scene Coordinator
Emergency Response Branch
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

**Subject: Letter Report on Emergency Response Activities
Posen Chemical Fire Site
Posen, Cook County, Illinois
Technical Direction Document No. S05-0305-013
Tetra Tech Contract No. 68-W-00-129**

Dear Mr. Thomas:

The Tetra Tech EM Inc. (Tetra Tech) Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) is submitting the enclosed letter report regarding emergency response activities at the Posen Chemical Fire site in Posen, Cook County, Illinois.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the report or require additional copies, please contact me at (312) 946-6442 or Thomas Kouris at (312) 946-6431.

Sincerely,

Michelle Cullerton
Tetra Tech START Project Manager

Enclosure

cc: Lorraine Kosik, U.S. EPA START Project Officer
Thomas Kouris, Tetra Tech START Program Manager

**LETTER REPORT ON EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES
POSEN CHEMICAL FIRE SITE
POSEN, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

Prepared for

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region 5 Emergency Response Branch
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604

Date Prepared:	June 12, 2003
TDD No.:	S05-0305-013
Contract No.:	68-W-00-129
Prepared by:	Tetra Tech EM Inc.
Tetra Tech START Project Manager:	Michelle Cullerton
Telephone No.:	(312) 946-6442
U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinator:	Craig Thomas
Telephone No.:	(312) 886-5907

CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 SITE BACKGROUND	2
3.0 RESPONSE ACTIVITIES	5
4.0 SUMMARY	6

Appendix

PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG

FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 SITE LOCATION MAP	3
2 SITE LAYOUT MAP	4



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Tetra Tech EM Inc. (Tetra Tech) Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) has prepared this letter report in accordance with Technical Direction Document (TDD) No. S05-0305-013, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) assigned to START. The scope of this TDD was to perform emergency response activities at the Posen Chemical Fire site in Posen, Cook County, Illinois. The response activities included site and perimeter air monitoring, surface water runoff monitoring, and monitoring of START costs.

This report presents site background information, describes the response activities, and provides a summary of the response. The appendix to this report presents a photographic log for the response activities.



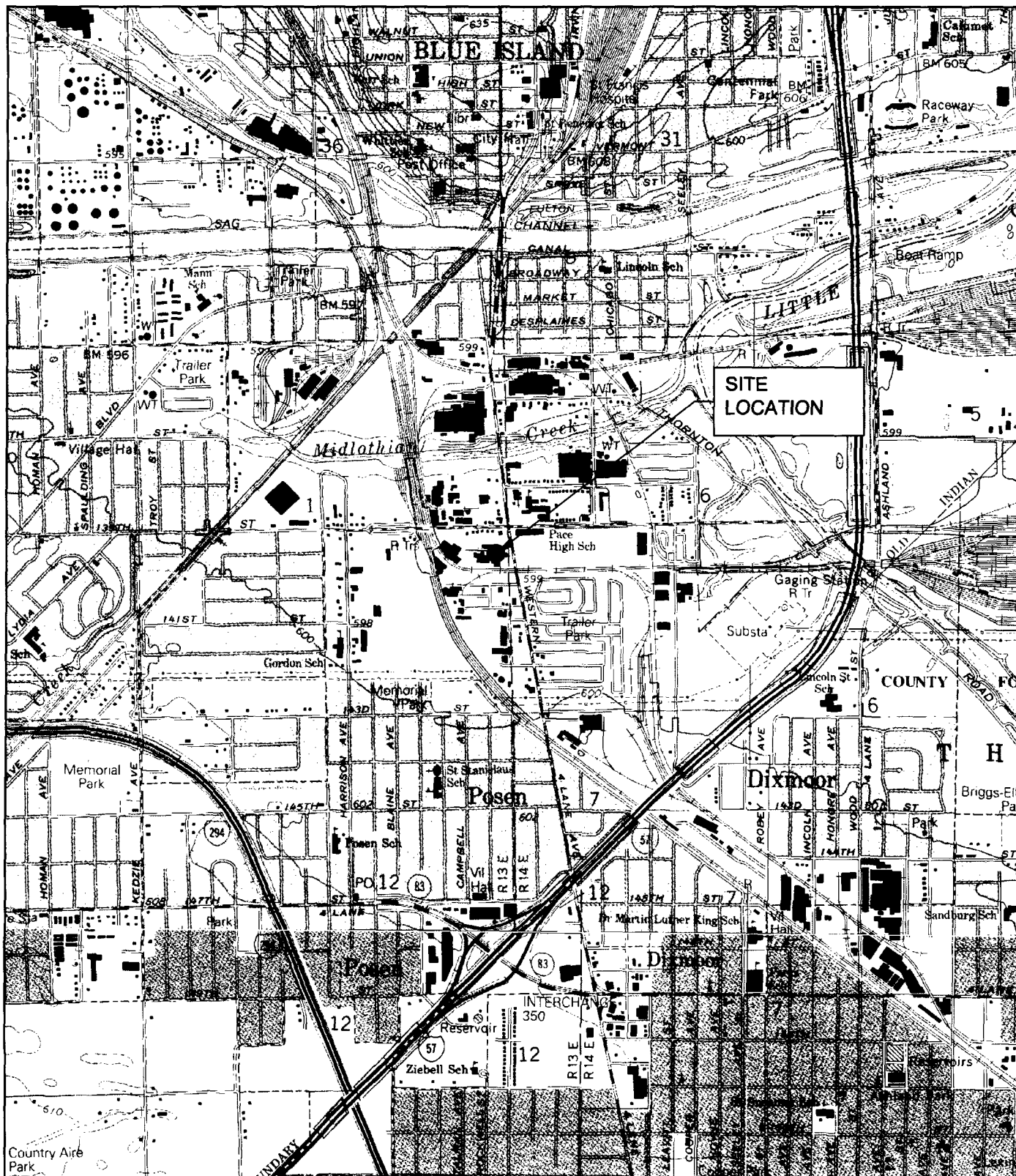
2.0 SITE BACKGROUND

The fire occurred at the Fiber Drum Sales (Fiber Drum) facility located at 2437 W. 139th Place in Posen, Cook County, Illinois (see Figure 1). The Fiber Drum facility washes, detoxifies, and recycles used plastic and compressed cardboard drums and barrels. The site contains three facility buildings and a drum and container storage area lying southwest of the buildings. The site is bordered by residential properties to the north, Peer and Berkshire Foods to the west, a large parking area to the south, and Western Avenue to the east (see Figure 2). The southern portion of the site is partially secured to the south by a chain-link fence.

On Monday, May 19, 2003, a fire destroyed two buildings belonging to the Fiber Drum facility. Based on information provided by Robert Steele, Chief of the Posen Fire Department (PFD) and various firefighters, the fire broke out at 6:45 a.m. and was under control and extinguished by 9:00 a.m. Drums and barrels present at the site potentially contained small amounts of hazardous or explosive chemicals. Members of the PFD conducted an inspection of the facility and found that several thousand drums located both inside and to the southwest of the burned buildings contained various types of materials, including plastics, hexane, and a caustic cleaning solution. In consultation with a chemist from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), the PFD determined that combustion of the plastics could have generated compounds such as carbon dioxide, formaldehyde, and acetic acid. In addition, the PFD found that water used to extinguish the fire may have mixed with hazardous chemicals and cleaning products at the site.

Chief Steele requested assistance at the site from IEPA and U.S. EPA to determine whether air particulates or water runoff posed a threat to human health and the environment. U.S. EPA then directed START to provide emergency response support at the site.





0 1000 2000
SCALE IN FEET

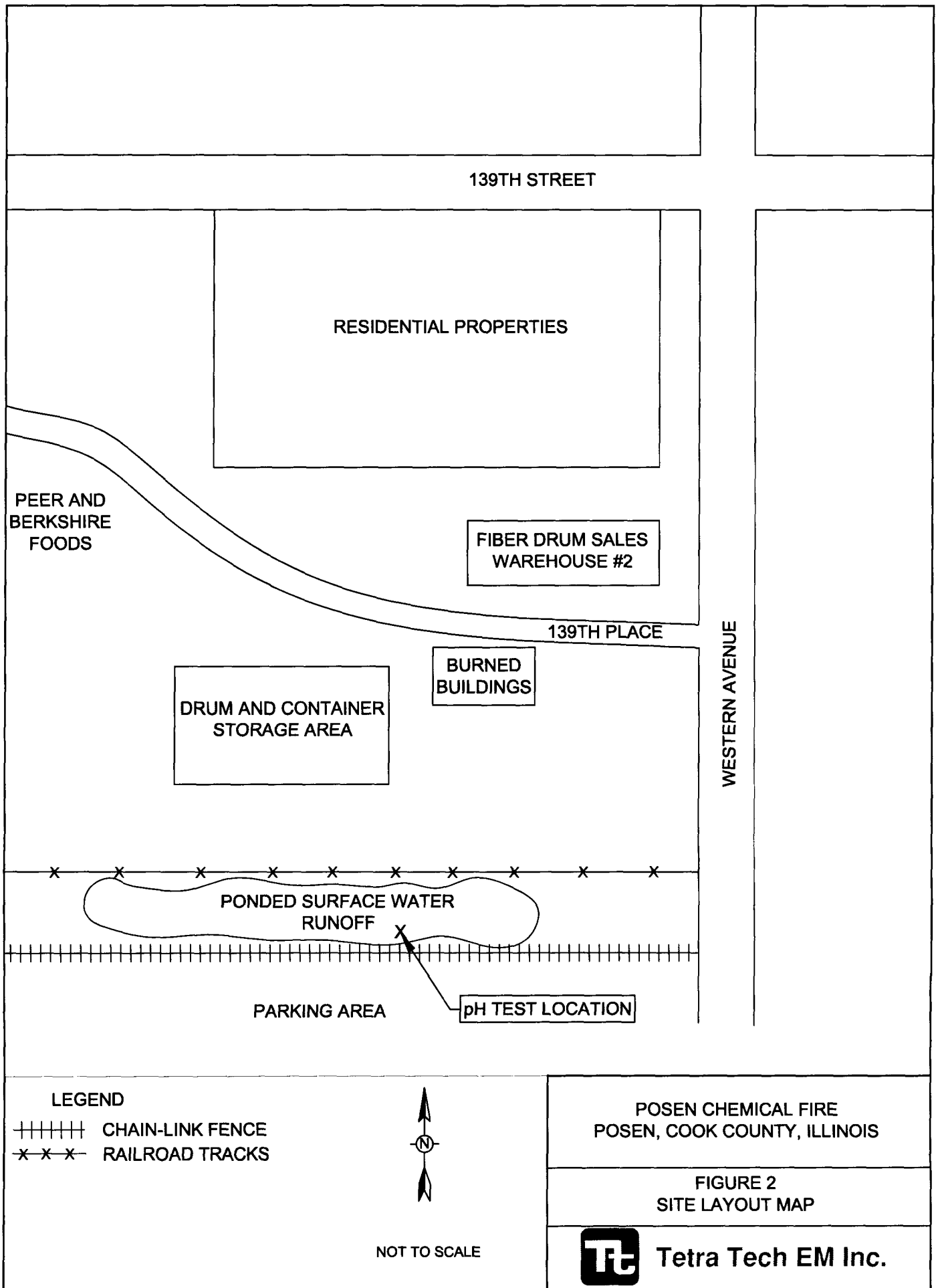
POSEN CHEMICAL FIRE
POSEN, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

FIGURE 1
SITE LOCATION MAP



Tetra Tech EM Inc.

SOURCE: MODIFIED FROM USGS, BLUE ISLAND AND HARVEY, ILLINOIS, QUADRANGLE, 1993



3.0 RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

At approximately 9:30 a.m. on May 19, 2003, START arrived at the site. START used a photoionization detector (PID) and flame ionization detector (FID) to collect air monitoring readings to the north, east, south, and west of the Fibre Drum facility. The monitoring results were 0 part per million (ppm) in each direction.

START also took a pH reading of water runoff that had ponded south of the facility near some railroad tracks. The pond of standing water was approximately 350 feet long and 25 feet wide and exhibited a pH of 11 standard units. Figure 2 shows the pH test location.

At approximately 11:30 a.m., Chief Steele of the PFD informed U.S. EPA that the owner of the facility had assumed full responsibility for site cleanup activities, including addressing the ponded water with elevated pH and the remaining drum contents. Because the fire no longer posed an imminent threat to human health and the environment, Chief Steele indicated that U.S. EPA, IEPA, and START were dismissed from the Incident Command Structure. However, U.S. EPA and IEPA remained at the site to ensure that the facility owner's environmental contractor had a clear understanding of the environmental concerns that should be addressed. U.S. EPA and IEPA left the site at approximately 12:30 pm.



4.0 SUMMARY

On Monday, May 19, 2003, a fire destroyed two buildings at the Fiber Drum facility located at 2437 W. 139th Place in Posen, Cook County, Illinois. Based on information provided by the PFD, the fire broke out at 6:45 a.m. and was under control and extinguished by 9:00 a.m. The facility washes, detoxifies, and recycles used plastic and compressed cardboard drums and barrels potentially containing small amounts of hazardous or explosive chemicals. The facility also stored several thousand drums inside and outside the burned buildings containing various types of materials, including plastics, hexane, and a caustic cleaning solution. Chief Steele of the PFD requested assistance at the site from IEPA and U.S. EPA to determine whether air particulates or water runoff posed a threat to human health and the environment. U.S. EPA then directed START to provide emergency response support at the site.

At approximately 9:30 a.m. on May 19, START arrived at the site. START used a PID and FID to collect air monitoring readings. Readings collected to the north, east, south, and west of the facility were all 0 ppm. START also obtained a pH reading of 11 standard units from water runoff that had puddled south of the facility near some railroad tracks.

At 11:30 a.m. on May 19, Chief Steele informed U.S. EPA that the owner of the facility had assumed full responsibility for site cleanup activities. U.S. EPA, IEPA, and START were then dismissed from the Incident Command Structure. U.S. EPA and IEPA left the site at approximately 12:30 p.m.

START does not anticipate any further activities at the site under the TDD.



APPENDIX
PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG
(Four Pages)





Photograph No.:	1	Orientation:	West
TDD No.:	S05-0305-013	Date:	May 19, 2003
Location:	Posen Chemical Fire		
Subject:	Surface water runoff collecting into storm drain		



Photograph No.:	2	Orientation:	Southeast
TDD No.:	S05-0305-013	Date:	May 19, 2003
Location:	Posen Chemical Fire		
Subject:	Drum and container storage area, partially burned		



Photograph No.: 3
TDD No.: S05-0305-013
Location: Posen Chemical Fire
Subject: Drum and container storage area, partially burned

Orientation: Southeast
Date: May 19, 2003



Photograph No.: 4
TDD No.: S05-0305-013
Location: Posen Chemical Fire
Subject: Partially burned building

Orientation: South
Date: May 19, 2003



Photograph No.:	5	Orientation:	West
TDD No.:	S05-0305-013	Date:	May 19, 2003
Location:	Posen Chemical Fire		
Subject:	Ponded surface water runoff just south of the site		



Photograph No.:	6	Orientation:	Northwest
TDD No.:	S05-0305-013	Date:	May 19, 2003
Location:	Posen Chemical Fire		
Subject:	Ponded surface water runoff just south of the site		



Photograph No.:	7	Orientation:	North
TDD No.:	S05-0305-013	Date:	May 19, 2003
Location:	Posen Chemical Fire		
Subject:	Ponded surface water runoff just south of the site		